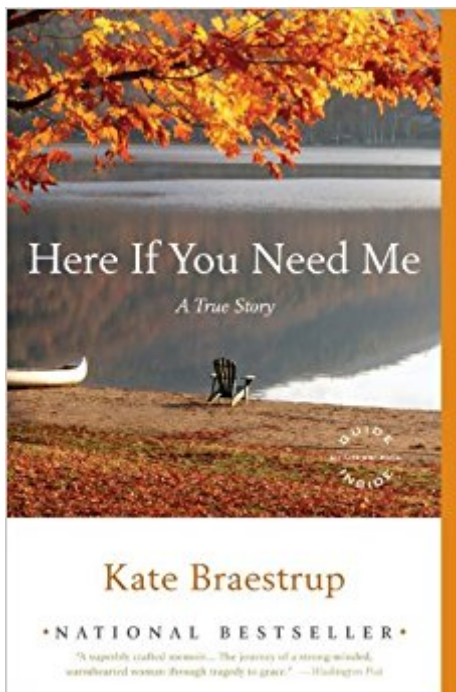


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# Here If You Need Me: A True Story



## Synopsis

HERE IF YOU NEED ME is the story Kate Braestrup's remarkable journey from grief to faith to happiness - as she holds her family together in the wake of her husband's death, pursues his dream of becoming a minister, and ultimately finds her calling as a chaplain to search-and-rescue workers. It is dramatic, funny, deeply moving, and simply unforgettable--an uplifting account of finding God through helping others, and of the small miracles that happen every day when a heart is grateful and love is restored.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. It may take ingenuity to interest browsers in a memoir by a middle-aged mother who, 11 years ago, was suddenly widowed, then became a Unitarian-Universalist minister, and now works as chaplain to game wardens in Maine. But good memoir writing does not depend on celebrity or adventure—•who'd have thought that a self-confessed recovering neurotic like Anne Lamott or a monastically inclined poet like Kathleen Norris would make it big?—•and Braestrup's insightful essays are extraordinarily well written, mingling elements of police procedural and touching love story with trenchant observations about life and death. Alert to comic detail even in grisly circumstances (bears, for example, like to play ball with human skulls), she tells stories of lost children, a suicide, drunken accidents and a murder, always with compassion and a concern for the big questions inescapably provoked by tragic events. Why did Dad die? her children ask, and her response describes not only her theology but also her reason for being a chaplain: Nowhere in

scripture does it say 'God is a car accident' or 'God is death.' God is justice and kindness, mercy, and always—always—love. So if you want to know where God is in this or in anything, look for love. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Braestrup was an accidental chaplain. Her husband, Drew, a Maine state trooper, died in a car accident at a time when he was considering a second career as an ordained minister. After her shock subsided, Braestrup decided to follow in his footsteps and became a chaplain for the Maine Warden Service, which sets up search-and-rescue missions throughout the state. Practical, unsentimental, straightforward, she is the kind of person who considers a book entitled *Death to Dust: What Happens to Dead Bodies?* a romantic gift (Drew's to her on her thirty-first birthday). She, not the mortician, bathed and dressed Drew's body. She witnessed its cremation. And, rather anomalously, she, a middle-aged mother of four, works mostly with young men. Her own remarkable story encompasses those of the men and women who work alongside her, incorporating many touching anecdotes, none more moving than that of the state police detective, a breast-feeding mother whose last name is Love, who arrests a sexual predator for a young woman's murder. A poignant, funny book by a sympathetic, likable, immensely appealing figure. Sawyers, June --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Here If You Need Me" is a story of tragedy, recovery, and triumph. Put another way, it's a story of survival, after this mother-of-four loses her husband in a freak motor vehicle accident. People deal with tragedy in different ways. After her husband's untimely death, Kate Braestrup takes the unusual step of becoming an ordained minister, then joins the Maine Warden Service as its chaplain. Not only does she raise her family after the loss of their father, but she provides comfort not only to the relatives of loved ones lost in the Maine wilderness, but comfort to her fellow Wardens as they toil about in their daily (and nightly) tasks: catching poachers, search and rescue, and (sadly) search and recovery. In the process of helping others, she helps herself. There are thousands of stories out there about how ordinary people overcome life's tragedies. Yet, each story is unique, and offers much to learn. I highly recommend this book, as it too offers a unique story. Download it, read it, and applaud Kate for her triumph.

Wow. That one word should be enough, but you want to know why it's a wow don't you? Well, for one thing, it's a true story. It's a story about making a difference, faith you can count on in terrible

times, funny family life, and an insiders look into the conservation service's game wardens in the role of search and find rescuers for people who are in perilous circumstances in wilderness areas. A lot of people have summarized the story, so I won't repeat that. I LIKE this woman, Kate Braestrup. I admire her. Her willingness to be there for shattered people at the time they get life changing news is courage of the first order. Her faith holds the concept of God as the best parent ever, and she has the gift of offering that affirming comfort to others. She's also witty, incisive, and intelligent. I'd like to be friends with her. I think you might too.

As a mother of four and wife to Maine State trooper Drew Griffith, Kate Braestrup thought her life was in order as a wife, mother, and writer. Drew's plans though were to go to school to become a Unitarian minister. Suddenly though, Kate becomes a widow and then decides to pursue Drew's dream. She becomes a Unitarian minister and begins working with the Maine Game Warden department, mainly ministering to the families of those involved in search and rescue attempts - the hikers, the lost snowmobilers, the swimmers falling over a waterfall, the despondent young women, the lost children. However this book isn't, as I had first thought, simply full of anecdotes of Kate's involvement with search and rescue attempts. Oh no, it is much, much more than that. There are plenty of interesting anecdotes that's for sure but it is a story of Kate's life as a single mother, as a spiritual woman, as a spiritual leader, and as a caring human being. It is a book full of the essays of a talented writer giving her take on life, death, and heaven, all in a gentle way where it is easy to imagine the skill in which she is able to minister to those in need. She does so without judging anyone be they a fundamentalist, atheist, agnostic, or of any other belief. There is the story of a young suicide victim whose brother she counsels and consoles as he is worried she will be unable to have a Christian burial because of the way she died, there is the story of the parents Kate spends the night consoling with after their daughter goes missing, answering the atheist mother who says, "It's so cool that the warden service has a chaplain to keep us from freaking out," by responding, "I'm not really here to keep you from freaking out. I'm here to be with you while you freak out." And here is the story of Kate, the mother, helping her four children get over the death of their beloved father, all the while in deep mourning herself. Kate who loved her husband so deeply. So very deeply that she does for her husband what few new widows will ever do in this modern age. All I can say is WOW. I don't know when I have been so moved by a book. The reader will be moved to tears, laugh out loud, begin a spiritual awakening - and keep the book nearby for re-reading of Kate's essays again and again. You will wish she was your friend, your pastor. You will wish you had the honor of having her wisdom nearby on a daily basis. But since you don't reading this book will have to

suffice. The world would be a better place if there were more Kate Braestrups in it. God bless you Kate and thank you for sharing a part of your world and your wisdom in this magnificent read.

I read this book as part of a book group. From the beginning the story of Kate's experiences gripped me as she went out as a person of faith. This is not the faith in a God that never lets bad things happen (if that were true, then who would need a chaplain?) but as a woman who is willing to step into the darkest of places and stay with those who find themselves there. My warning, if you cry easily, don't read this in public places. The tender way she describes those who are lost, some found, many waiting, and her charges searching will touch your heart. I had many "favorite" parts and bookmarked quite a few pages. I'll share just one here. When talking to the brother of a suicide victim. He asked if she could be buried in a Christian church. The top level question, "Will the people of the church care for my sister?" The deeper question, "Will God?" Kate's reply: "The game wardens have been walking in the rain all day, walking through the woods in the freezing rain trying to find your sister. They would have walked all day tomorrow, walked in the cold rain the rest of the week, searching for Betsy, so they could bring her home to you. And if there is one thing I am sure of - one thing I am very, very sure of, Dan - it is that God is not less kind, less committed, or less merciful than a Maine game warden." May we all know that about God.

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